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BAD 1950s EC COMICS!

INCREIBLE



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CANADA



CLEAN START

LTH WAS SWEATY. OUTSIDE THE SHIP, EARTH LAY DEAD. THE DAYLID SUNLIGHT STILL FLECKED THE POLYESTER FLOOR, THE WAVES STILL RUSTLED SOFTLY IN THE SCOTCH WIND, BUT THE ANIMAL AND INSECT LIFE THAT HAD ONCE FORMED THIS WERD-BANT PLANET WAS NO MORE. IT HAD BEEN CHAINED. HERE LAY THE TINY BODY OF A BIRD... THERE, THE CORPSE OF A DEER... ALL SEEMED TO HAVE GONE WELL. YET SHE SHOULD HAVE RETURNED BY NOW. LTH STIRRED HOSTILELY, BEHIND HER, THE MAN-THING STIRRED ALSO. LTH EXTENDED A PODU-DOPOD FROM THE PROTOPLASMIC MASS THAT WAS HER BODY...

THE EYE FORMED. LTH STUDIED THE MAN-THING. SHE WATCHED HIM STRUGGLE TO HIS FEET... TURN DAZZLEDY... AND STARE AT HER, HIS FACE A MASK OF HORROR...

NO! NO! THIS... THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING!



POOR LITTLE EARTHLING. THERE WAS SO MUCH HORROR AMBITING HIM. LTH WAS COMPASSIONATE, THO ENOUGH LATER FOR HIM TO FACE REALITY. HER THOUGHT WAVE STRUCK HIS BRAIN LIKE A TRIP-HAMMER...

YOU... YOU... SPWWPader!



THE MAN-THING FELL BACK, STUNNED, AND GAVE TO THE DECA-PLATES. LTH RETURNED TO HER BLINKING. IN A HURRY, SHE REMEMBERED WHAT SHE AND BSK HAD DONE. BUT HAD NOT THE PROCTORS SAID... "BY ANY MEANS?"

YOUR TASK, THEREFORE, IS TO INSURE, BY ANY MEANS, THAT THE THIRD PLANET WILL NOT BEING JUDGMENTARY TO THIS FEDERATION.



LTH REMEMBERED. THE REPRESENTATIVES OF EVERY PLANET OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM... EXCEPT ONE. IT HAD BEEN ONE OF LTH'S KIND WHO HAD VOICED THE WORD.

THE BEFORE WE LEAVE TO JOINT EARTH IS NOW ENTERING THE THIRD DEVELOPMENT STAGE... NUCLEAR FISSION? YOU KNOW THE FOURTH STAGE...



YES? GRASS FRAPLES... AND THEN... YOUR FRAPLES?

EXACTLY? MAN, AS THE DOMINANT LIFE FORM ON THE THIRD PLANET CALLS ITSELF, WILL HAVE TO BE BROUGHT INTO THE SOLAR FEDERATION WHEN THAT HAPPENS!



AND MAN IS UNWILLING TO TAKE A PLACE IN OUR FEDERATION?



MAN IS A BRUTAL, BLOODTHIRSTY SAVAGE WHO WOULD DESTROY US ALL! WE MUST BE AWARE THAT... IS YOUR PROBLEM, LTH AND BSK?

SOMEWHERE AT SOME MOMENT IN ITS HISTORY... THE RACE OF MAN TOOK A PROFOUND DECISION? IT CHOSE, INSTEAD OF PEACE, A PATH OF HOSTILITY? YOU MUST FIND THAT EXACT MOMENT AND PREVENT MAN FROM TAKING THAT WRONG TURN SO THAT HE WILL DEVELOP PEACEFULLY... AS WE HAVE!



THE PROBLEM HAD NOT SEEMED DIFFICULT TO LTH THEN. AFTER A TINY INCIDENT IN THE TIME CONTINUUM AND NOW ALTER THE FUTURE FOR ALL ETERNITY! BUT LATER, IN THE SHIP, ON THE TRIP THERE, LTH HAD HAD DOUBTS...



BUT? PERHAPS... PERHAPS IT WOULD BE BEST IF WE ONLY OBSERVED FROM A DISTANCE AT FIRST?

TIME IS SO... SO PAUCY, BSK? GIVEN TIME, MAN MIGHT TAKE THE WAY OF PEACE OF HIS OWN ACCORD. WHAT IF WE CHOOSE THE... THE PROPER MOMENT?



WE ARE SCIENTISTS, LTH. WE SHALL CHOOSE THE RIGHT MOMENT! BUT PERHAPS IT WOULD BE BETTER... FOR NOW... MERELY TO OBSERVE?

FIND THAT MOMENT, AND ALTER MAN'S HISTORY? IT HAD BEEN SO EASY TO SAY. THE SHIP HAD SPED BACKWARD IN TIME. BUT ALWAYS, THE PATTERN WAS THE SAME...



STILL THEY FIGHT... BROTHER AGAINST BROTHER, EVEN? THE SAME... INEVITABLE.



WHY? BECAUSE? ALL THOSE TROOPERS... ALL THAT HATE? I KNOW PAINTED MEN!

LET US GO BACK STILL FURTHER IN TIME. JUNE—WHERE IN THEIR HISTORY, EXACTLY, MEN WOULD NOT LIKE THIS?

AT FIRST, LTH HAD PITIED THE POOR CREATURES AS THEY IS LIGHTENED EACH OTHER. ONE AND THE HAD EVEN WINKLED WITH MAN ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.



THE PEOPLE' LOOK HOW SOME OF THEM SUFFER BECAUSE OTHERS DESIRE POWER OVER THEM.



THEIR PLANET? COULD BE A PLACE OF PEACE AND PLenty, BUT THEY WILL NOT WANT IT SO!

THEY KNOW NO BETTER, SAY? IT WAS PROPOSING THAT WE ASSUME THEIR FORM AND MINGLE WITH THEM? HAVE YOU HAD ENOUGH?



NO, LTH? SOMEWHERE WE WILL FIND WHAT WE SEEK. WE WILL GO FURTHER BACK IN TIME. THERE MUST HAVE BEEN A TIME WHEN MAN WAS NOT LIKE THIS? THERE MUST HAVE BEEN!



BUT THERE HAD BEEN NO SUCH TIME.

ALWAYS, NO MATTER HOW FAR BACK THEY'D GONE, IT HAD BEEN THE SAME.



IN THE END, LTH AND BRX HAD KNOWN THE TRUTH. MAN HAD NEVER KNOWN THE PATH OF PEACE, AND BRX HAD WONDED HIS SOLUTION.



IT IS NO USE, LTH. THERE IS ONLY ONE ANSWER! MAN... MUST START OVER AGAIN!

MAN MUST BE GUIDED... FURTHER FROM THE BEST INTEREST OF THE RACE WERE DESTROYED, AND ONLY TWO... A MALE AND A FEMALE... WERE APPROPRIATE, AND FURTHER, PERHAPS MAN MUST BRING HIS PLANET THE PARADISE IT COULD BE!



WE COULD GUIDE THE TWO SURVIVORS AND WHEN THEY'D COMPLETED THEIR SHORT LIFE SPAN, WE COULD GUIDE THEIR DESCENDANTS AND THEIR DESCENDANTS' DESCENDANTS...



UNTIL ARPE AND PARADISE HAVE BEEN ASSESSMENT AND MAN CAN GO ON TO A HISTORY OF PEACE AND A PLACE IN THE REGENERATION THAT I DESIRE.

LTH HAD AGREED BECAUSE IT HAD SEEMED TO BE THE ONLY ANSWER. THERE HAD BEEN NO ONE TO SEE WHEN THEIR SHIP MATERIALIZED IN A FOREST ON EARTH...

I HAVE BROUGHT US BACK TO THE PRESENT SO THAT WE MAY FIND A DIFFERENT, ADVANCED SPECIES YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO, LTH!



YES, I WILL FIND A MALE HUMAN OF THE CLOSEST POSSIBLE TYPE AND RETURN WITH HIM IN EXACTLY TEN EARTH DAYS!



AS I SHALL RETURN WITH A FEMALE! WE ARE AGREED, THEN.

CAREFULLY, BRX HAD SET "THE DESTROYER", IN TEN EARTH DAYS, TO THE SPILT SECOND, IT WOULD ACTIVATE ITSELF. ENERGY WOULD STREAM OUT IN ALL DIRECTIONS, AND MAN WOULD DIE. IT WAS NECESSARY YET LTH WONDERS...



BRX? IS THERE NO OTHER WAY?

NOAH! THERE! IT IS SET! LET US BE OFF!

NO, LTH HAD TO ADMIT, THERE WAS NO OTHER WAY! AND SO, MOMENT LATER, THEIR CRAFT'S TWO SCOUT-SHIPS HAD SPED SILENTLY AWAY...



...AND IN ONE, LTH HAD DEALT WITH A LITTLE DAMAGE AT THE REFLECTION OF THE SHARP KITS WHICH WERE PROVED HER 'LASTIC' WALLABLE, PHOTOPLASMIC BODY...



THERE HAD BEEN NO GREAT URGENCY AT FIRST, AND SO HER SCOUT SHIP HAD A LUN OVER SEAS, WHIRLED ACROSS CONTINENTS...



LTH HAD SEARCHED FAR, BUT ON THE FLAMES, THE TERRING CITIES WERE THE CENTER OF CULTURE. LTH HAD CHOSEN THE LARGEST FOR THE FINAL SEASON AND A CHOICE HAD SEEMED SIMPLE...



SHE'D FOUND HER SPECIMEN AND FOLLOWED HIM, WAITING FOR OPPORTUNITIES, EAR...



WHAT'S THE MATTER, GORGEOUS? HAT HOT FOR TOMORROW, YOU DON'T HAVE TO PLAY COY LET WITH ME NOW! I KNOW THE SCENE! I KNOW WE YOU'VE BEEN FOLLOWING ME! GORGEOUS! LET'S GET ACQUAINTED...



AT FIRST, LTH HAD CHOSEN A MALE WHO'D SEEMED TO HAVE ALL OF THE QUALITIES SHE'D SOUGHT, BUT THERE CRYSTALS WERE NOT ALL THAT SEEMED? WHEN SHE'D LOOKED INTO HIS MIND, WHAT WAS THERE, HAD SHOCKED HER! SHE'D STUNNED HIM WITH A THOUGHT NAME...



BUT FOR THAT BAD ONE, THERE'D BEEN THOUSANDS OF GOOD ONES TO CHOOSE FROM. LTH HAD BEEN UNABLE TO MAKE UP HER MIND...



SHE'D LET TIME PASS. THE DAYS HAD SPED BY AND, IN THE END, TIME HAD SIMPLY RUN OUT...



IN SECONDS, "THE DESTROYER" WOULD ACTIVATE ITSELF!! LTH HAD HAD TO CHOOSE... FROM... AT SOME AT-RANDOM... BEFORE IT WAS TOO LATE...



THE MALE HAD FALLEN UNCONSCIOUS, AND IN THAT INSTANT, LTH HAD THROWN A PROTECTIVE, INVISIBLE WALL OF COUNTER-ENERGY ABOUT HIM AND ABOUT HERSELF... JUST IN TIME...

SUDDENLY, THE CITY HAD BECOME SILENT. SUDDENLY, THE CITY HAD DIED. WAR HAD STOPPED. THERE'D BEEN NO STOP, THEN, FOR LTH'S DISGUST. THE DESTROYER HAD DONE ITS WORK WELL...



SHE'D LIFTED HER PRIDE AND CARRIED HIM OUT OF THE STONE, OUT INTO THE DEAD CITY...

SHE'D MOVED THROUGH THE CITY SADLY... THROUGH THE SILENCE AND THE STILLNESS...



LTH SHOOK, REMEMBERING. YES, IT WAS A GREAT FUN. BUT THERE HAD BEEN NO CHANCE. BEHIND HER LAY THE DRIVE FOR THE FUTURE OF MAN, AND SOMEBODY, OUT THERE, WHO WOULD BE COMING WITH ITS BATTLE...



SOMETHING WAS WRONG. LTH COULD FEEL IT. HER ANXIETY AND WORRY HAD RELEASED HER MENTAL HOLD ON THE MAN BEHIND HER. HE WAS GOING, STAYING AWAY FROM LTH...



IT WAS THEN THAT THE MAN'S THOUGHTS REACHED OUT TO LTH. IT WAS THEN THAT SHE HAD NO MORE SPOON THE TRUE MEANING OF THE NOTION IN THE MAN'S EYES...



BUT DARKNESS WAS SETTING IN NOW. DARKNESS, LIKE A MOURNING VEIL OVER THE CRATH ALL AROUND THE SHIP. LTH ABOUT AND GLUED TOWARD THE PORT...



SHE WAS TURNING THE CLEARING, FEEDING INTO THE LOW-THRESHOLD SHADOWS, AND USUALLY. TOWARD HER, THE MAN STIRRED AGAIN...



AND WHEN LTH TURNED AND SAW THE HORROR IN THE MAN'S EYES, SHE WAS FILLED WITH PITY...



...EVEN BEFORE HIS BODY BEGAN TO SHAPE INTO ITSELF TO CHANGE... TO LOSE ITS SHAPE. EVEN BEFORE HE RETURNED TO HIS NATURAL FORM...



MARBLES

IT WAS A SOLEMN MOMENT FOR THE CAREFULLY CHOSEN AND EXTENSIVELY TRAINED CREW OF THE S-IT. AFTER LONG MONTHS, THEY NOW STOOD ON THE THRESHOLD OF FAME AND FORTUNE... A GLORIOUS ADVENTURE FOR THEM TURNED ECONOMICALLY FROM THE NEAT BLACK HOLE OVERHEAD. THE S-IT WAS TO BE THE FIRST MAN-CARRYING ROCKET TO BE LAUNCHED FROM EARTH. THEY WOULD BE THE FIRST EARTHMEN TO REACH ANOTHER PLANET. THE CREW MEN STARED UP AT THE STAR-STUDDED HEAVENS IN AWE AND FASCINATION.

LOOK AT 'EM UP THERE... WAITING FOR US? STARS... PLANETS... THE WHOLE SKYWAY... WAITING?



FUNNY! FOR ALL WE KNOW, THOSE BRIGHT LITTLE PIN-POINTS WE SEE UP THERE MIGHT BE NOTHING BUT MARBLES. SMART LITTLE MARBLES!



DON'T WORRY, HOLLIS! THOSE STARS UP THERE ARE A LOT BIGGER THAN MARBLES! AND THEY CAN'T BE PLAYED WITH, EITHER... NOT WITHOUT GETTING YOUR FINGERS BURNED. SOME OF THOSE BURNING BALLS UP THERE HAVE WE CAN'T KNOW ADD UP MANY MILLIONS OF DEGREES HEAT BURNING THEM UP!

NOT THE ONE WE'RE GOING TO LAND TO LAND ON! I KNOW!



AND DIDN'T NOT THE ONE WE'RE GOING TO LAND ON? HELL, DOESN'T IT JUMP LIKE A STAFF HARD TO A PLANET...

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! THIS IS A MOMENTOUS HOUR IN THE HISTORY OF MANKIND...



THE LAUNCHING CEREMONY BEGAN. THE BATTERY OF LOUSEPEAKERS DROINED OVER THE HURLED CROWD OF GATHERED NOTABLES...

THE FIRST SPACE JUMP CAPABLE OF REACHING OTHER PLANETS IS READY FOR ITS PERILOUS JOURNEY. IN A FEW MOMENTS, A BUTTON WILL BE PRESSED, WORLD WILL CONTACT WORLD. THE UNIVERSE WILL SHRINK... AND MAN WILL BE ITS SHRIEKER.



THE LOUSEPEAKERS DROINED ON. THE GENERAL TURNED TO THE CREW MEMBERS. MURRAY... POLLIN... ENIGMA... DANTON...

EVERY PRECAUTION HAS BEEN TAKEN FOR YOUR SAFETY. EVERY SCIENTIFIC DEVICE... EVERY COMFORT KNOWN TO MAN HAS BEEN PLACED AT YOUR DISPOSAL. YOU WILL BE AS SAFE A MILLION MILES OUT IN SPACE AS YOU WOULD BE IN YOUR OWN BED AT HOME.



MOMENTS LATER, WITHIN THE X-17, FOUR MEN LAY IN THEIR SLEEP-DOCKERS... AWAITING THEIR DESTINY...



ALL OF THE YEARS OF RESEARCH... ALL OF THE EXPERIMENTATION AND THEORY AND TRIAL AND ERROR WERE ALMOST OVER...

AS THE X-17, WITH ITS HAND-PICKED CREW, BATTLED THROUGH SPACE TO ITS DESTINATION, EVERY INCH OF ITS TRIP WILL BE RECORDED HERE ON EARTH. EVERY EXPERIENCE OF THE MEN WITHIN HERM ALLOY SHELL WILL BE NOSED DOWN. WE WILL BE IN CONSTANT COMMUNICATION...



THE GENERAL LIFTED THE CHAMPAGNE BOTTLE...

TODAY, YOU STAND AS COLUMBUS STOOD OVER 400 YEARS AGO... ON THE BRINK OF THE UNKNOWN. MAY YOU MAKE AS STUPENDOUS AND EXCITING A DISCOVERY AS HE MADE IN HIS DAY. I HEREBY LAUNCH THE FIRST PLANET-BOARD ROCKET... THE X-17.



A FINGER MOVED... BUTTONS GLOWED...

...AND MAN REACHED FOR THE STAIRS WITH AN EXP-SPLITTING ROAR...

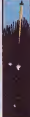


YES, WAR REACHED FOR THE
STARS WITH A METEOR-WORSHIP
MONSTER THAT SPIT AND HOWLED
AND SHUDDERED...

...AND LEAPED UP INTO THE BLACK-
NESS ON A FINGER OF ORANGE
FLAME

IT...IT'S OUT
OF SIGHT!

WHAT ARE YOU WITH
THEM? THEY ARE IN
NO HANDS NOW!



FOR THE FIRST FEW DAYS OF THE FORTY-ONE SINCE VOYAGE, THE
REPORTS CAME IN AS EXPECTED...

BUT BY THE END OF THE SECOND WEEK, A
CURIOUS NOTE HAD CREEPT INTO THE COMMUN-
ICATIONS...



THIS IS MURRAY OF THE X-IF. EVERYTHING IS
PROCEEDING ACCORDING TO PLAN. SHIP IS
PERFORMING BEAUTIFULLY. NO INSTRUMENT
FAILURES. YOU'RE COMING THROUGH TO US
CLEARLY. HOW DO YOU HEAR US?

WE HEAR
YOU FINE,
MURRAY.



THE MESSAGE CAME FROM
MURRAY, SIR? HE...HE WANTS
TO KNOW IF WE WANT THE
DATA EXACTLY AS HE HAS
THE OTHERS JUST IT?

WELL, OF COURSE!
BLAST IT! WHAT
JERKS HAVE THEY
BEEN DOING?
WHELP! DATA WORKS
IF IT'S NOT ACCELERATED.
TELL MURRAY TO CUT
OUT THE GAMBIT!

AND BY THE END OF THE THIRD WEEK...



I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT, SIR. NOT AT ALL!
THE X-IF IS MAKING GOOD HEADWAY! THEY'VE
ENCOUNTERED LITTLE OR NO DIFFICULTY!
AND YET...THE DATA...THOSE REPORTS...

WELL? IF
WHAT
ABOUT
THOSE
REPORTS?



SIR? IF THESE REPORTS ARE CORRECT...IF WE
ARE TO BELIEVE THESE AS FACTS...THEN OUR
ENTIRE CONCEPT OF THE VOYAGER HAS TO
BE REVISED!



REMEMBER WHAT THE DEUCE ARE YOU DRAGGING ABOUT?

WELL, SAYS THE POWERED THE SHIP SETS FROM EARTH, THE SMALLER THEIR DESTINATION SEEMS TO GET.



WELL, WHY THAT'S ANNOYING? THEY MUST BE PULLING YOUR ARM, CONTACT THEM AT ONCE!

YES, SIR!



THIS IS EARTH, CALLING J-2P? THIS IS EARTH, CALLING J-2P? COME ON, J-2P...

THIS IS WARRIOR ON X-17, BAPT'S OPT I JUST HAVE YOU MY REPORT!



WELL, THIS IS GENERAL BULLET, WHAT'S THE ALL ABOUT? YOU SAY YOUR DESTINATION IS GETTING SMALLER?



IT GOT SMALLER, BUT WE JUST PLACED IT? IT WAS NO BIGGER THAN A BOUNCING BALL? ENEMIES DOWNED A SLIT AND WENT OUT AND PLACED IT UP? WE HAVE IT IN THE SHIP?



WELL, IN YOUR SHIP? NO BIGGER THAN A BOUNCING BALL? BULLET BULLET? DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SAYING?



YES, SIR? AND WE CHANGED COURSE? WE'RE GOING TO GO OVER AND PICK UP PLEASANT THE WAY IT LOOKS. EN, WE'VE DISCOVERED ALL DISAPPEARING THEORY? EVERYTHING IN SPACE, IS NO BIGGER THAN NO SUCH BY OUR LARGEST TELESCOPE ON EARTH... IN REALITY?

ACROSS THE VOID CHUCKLED THE ELECTRIC HUM OF HUMAN CONVERSATION AS A LONE SPACE-SHIP THROTTLED A TWO-ENG COURSE THROUGH BLACK EMPTY SPACE... REPORTS THAT MOCKED MAN'S KNOWLEDGE... DATA THAT LAUGHED AT SCIENCE...



WARRIOR IS NO BIGGER THAN A BOUNCING BALL? WE'VE TAKEN IT AHEAD?



JUPITER IS LIKE A POWERED BULLET... LIGHT AS A FEATHER...



YOU COULD NO MORE LAND ON PLEASANT THAN AN ELEPHANT COULD SIT ON A POP-HEAD...

NOT EVEN A SPARROW SHALL FALL...

"Dear LORD," wrote old Elmo Danton, "we love our green Earth, age-old home of the human race. You must not carry it out—the end of the world! Please, LORD . . . please!"

To Elmo, LORD meant one thing . . . the Licensed Organization Reducing Deadworlds. He addressed the letter properly to the LORD, Universe Center. His eyes misted, then, as he drank in the amber sun sinking behind emerald hills. Must this beauty be wantonly destroyed by another year, as scheduled in the cosmic scheme of things? Elmo rebelled inwardly. A bird sang. Stars twinkled forth. The moon silvered down. A breeze sighed gently. He wept.

Most people took the end of the world more calmly than Elmo. After all, there were millions of other worlds in space, many better. And there was plenty of time to evacuate all living souls of the 20th century, in the gigantic space transports, to Procyon V, already picked as their new home.

Tragedy? Hardly. Especially since it was plain fact that Earth was now a poor world, denuded of all coal, oil, metals, uranium. Long since stripped of all resources, putting it on Galactic Redial for years now. On Procyon V, a rich young world, humans could once more make good economically, regaining pride, shedding the humiliation of being beggars.

But old Elmo was sentimental about it, and was angry as no answer came from the LORD. He tried a spacegram, spacephone call, everything. But he could not reach the LORD, to plead that the end of the world be cancelled. His friends joked him, convinced he was completely unbalanced over Earth's doom.

"Elmo, be sensible," one friend said gently. "Snap out of it before it's too late. Who can change the great Galactic Plan? How ridiculous to expect the LORD to hear you, and save one tiny world from the scrapheap. Especially a worthless world like Earth is now."

"Yes," sighed Elmo, brokenly. "I guess the LORD won't listen to me about a worthless world like this. I'll give up trying to talk the LORD out of it."

To keep himself busy, before his call came on the space transports, Elmo went back to his job. For 25 years in the Geologic Survey, he had explored and mapped inner Earth

with X-radar, down for a thousand miles. But his work was not done. It would never be finished now . . .

He sat up suddenly at the image forming on his X-radar screen, of a huge unknown pocket far below. The automatic analyzer readings of what lay there were fantastic. Not granite. Igneous rock, lava, nor any of the usual wastes.

A gigantic mass of coal? Oceans of oil? Gold, copper, tungsten, germanium ore! And yes—plutonium, in vast heaps, more fashionable fuel than had ever been mined or dreamed of on the surface!

Elmo had to hurry, for already the signs of destruction had begun—whole mountain ranges ripping away from Earth—vast suction like hurricanes whirling dirt clouds into space. Zero hour Cataclysm begun . . .

Practically kidnapping the Secretary of Space to see his evidence and put through a top priority spacephone call, Elmo got through to Universe Center, on Sagittarius III, to the LORD. They too, all the LORD members, got excited when Elmo estimated the cache of resources waiting within Earth as a treasure of 100 trillion Galactic Dollars.

"Digging it up," Elmo concluded triumphantly, "earth will change over-night from an economic liability to an asset in the Galactic Union. You people of the LORD can't condemn my Earth as a worthless deadworld now."

"We're not fools," snapped back the executive of the LORD. "Luckily, we only started dismantling proceedings. Took away only a few mountain ranges with space tugs, for cheap building stone. And some black dirt in our Space Vacuum Sweeper. We can easily ferry back the few million Earthians sent to Procyon V. We hereby officially cancel the end of your world."

But when Elmo hung up, he was strangely quiet. He lifted his eyes upward hungrily. "No," he murmured to ~~himself~~ *himself*. "They didn't save Earth . . . not that LORD. They had nothing to do with the miracle of guiding my X-radar to that saving treasure far below, at the eleventh hour. I got through before to a Higher Power."

Elmo finished on his knees, head bowed.

"Thanks, dear Lord . . ."

CONDITIONED REFLEX

PROLOGUE: ON THE SCREEN, A WORLD DIED. MOUNTAINS OF FLAME LEAPED TEN THOUSAND MILES INTO SPACE. AND AT THE FIRE'S HEART, A PLANET WHITED. THE STUDENTS IN THE LECTURE HALL LEANED FORWARD, HUSHED, STUDYING THE AWESOME SPECTACLE, HARDLY AWARE OF THEIR PROFESSOR'S DRY, OBJECTIVE WORDS...

THIS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN... ON BAS... A PLANET OF THE STAR ALPHA CENTAURI? WE HAVE NAMED IT THOR...



THE PROFESSOR MOTIONED TO THE FIERY IMAGE ON THE MOVIE SCREEN...



1000 MILES FROM EARTH TO BE PICKED UP BY OUR TELESCOPE, THOR WAS DISCOVERED AND PHOTOGRAPHED ONLY BECAUSE IT SUDDENLY BURST INTO FLAME!

WHY IT DID SO, WE DO NOT KNOW! A SPECTROSCOPE ANALYSIS SHOWS THOR'S ATMOSPHERE TO BE MADE UP OF ONE PART OXYGEN AND NINE PARTS METHANE. OBVIOUSLY LIFE AS WE KNOW IT COULD NOT HAVE EXISTED IN SUCH AN ATMOSPHERE...



STORY: THE SHIP DESCENDED SLOWLY FROM SPACE. WHEN IT ENTERED THE METHANE ATMOSPHERE, ITS PLASTIC HULL WAS BARELY MOVING. THE MAGNETIC DRIVE BITS STILN HUMMED SOFTLY. THEN, THE SHIP TOUCHED DOWN...



SILENTLY, THE PILOT OF THE SHIP WAS CONDUCTED TO THE LEADERS. EACH LEADER, IN TURN, TOUCHED TENTACLES WITH HIM... A GREAT HONOR. FOR OLDF... THE PILOT... HAD JUST COMPLETED THE FIRST INTER-SOLAR-SYSTEM SPACE FLIGHT. AFTER THE WARM GREETING, CAME THE QUESTIONS.



I OBSERVED THE PLANET FOR SOME TIME. I MADE RECORDINGS OF ITS LANDMARKS. I MADE PHOTOGRAPHS OF ITS CREATURES. IT IS A PLACE OF VIOLENCE! ITS ROghest FORM OF LIFE IS VICIOUS, DANGEROUS, AND AMBITIOUS. MAN, HE IS CALLED. HE HAS NO SPACE TRAVEL. BUT EVERY MOMENT THAT GOES BY BRINGS HIM CLOSER TO IT!



THE BODIES IN THE PLASTIC SEATS STIFFED UNEASILY. THE LEADERS DIMMERED DOWN AND CONFERRED IN HOARSE WHISPERS...



ONCE AGAIN, OLDF WAS SUMMONED. THERE HE WAS NO QUESTION AS TO WHAT COURSE TO FOLLOW. OLDF PROMISED THE ANSWER...



THIS TIME, OLDF... YOU WILL LAND! YOU WILL GO AMONG THEM. YOU WILL STUDY THEIR WEAPONS... THEIR WEAKNESSES! WHEN WE ATTACK, WE MUST NOT FAIL!

OUR SOLDIERS HAVE STUDIED THE DATA YOU BROUGHT BACK. IT WILL BE A SIMPLE MATTER TO AFTER YOU SO THAT YOU MAY PASS AS ONE OF THEM!



AND SO IT WAS. ONE DAY, THE LEADERS GATHERED AGAIN. ONE DAY, OLDF HAD MASTERED A LANGUAGE OF EARTH. ONE DAY, HE MOVED EASILY IN HIS NEW BODY...



BUT APPEARANCE IS NOT ENOUGH! FOR YOU DEPENDS THE ULTIMATE FATE OF OUR WORLD... BE BARTY REMEMBER.

YOU MUST NOT BE DISCOVERED! YOU MUST LEARN TO *LIVE*... TO *FEEL*... AS MEN DO! YOU MUST DO *MORE*! THAN *RESEMBLE* A MAN. YOU MUST *BE* A MAN! REMEMBER THAT!



THE LANGUAGE QUON HAD MASTERED HAD BEEN SPOKEN IN ONE OF THE MANY LAND AREAS OF THE THIRD PLANET. QUON HEADED HIS SPACE CRAFT THERE.



IT WAS SO EASY FOR QUON TO BE ACCEPTED... TO POOL THESE EARTHLINGS. QUON LAUGHED INWARDLY LATER, EVEN AS HE WAGED DOWN THE ALIEN FOOD BEFORE HIM. THEY WERE LIKE CHILDREN.

GRAB, THEN, JOHN! FIFTY A MONTH AND ROOM AND BOARD! THAT'S MY BEST OFFER! TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT! OR... *SMOKE?*

B-SMOKE? OR... YES...



THIS TIME, THERE WAS NO TOUCHING OF TACTICALS. HOW COULD THERE BE? THE SHIP ROSE SLOWLY... SLOWLY. THEN, CLEAR OF THE ATMOSPHERE, IT RACED INTO SPACE, ITS BURNETS DRIVE WHIRLING...



THE SHIP LANDED AT NIGHT... SILENTLY. IT WAS THE WORK OF AN HOUR TO CONCEAL IT WITH BRUSH. ANOTHER HALF HOUR AFTER THAT, A YOUNG MAN APPEARED AT A FARMER'S DOOR...

A... MEAL? WHY, I... *NEED* FOOD. JOHN WE CAN SHARE SOME FOOD... IF YOU'RE WILLING TO CHOP... I AM WILLING! SOME GORDWOOD IN RETURN, WHAT'S YOUR NAME, BOY? I AM LOOKING FOR WORK!



IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT QUON LEARN EVERY MINUTE DETAIL OF BEING A MAN BEFORE HE COULD GO ON WITH HIS WORK. THIS WAS AS GOOD A PLACE AS ANY TO START...

HM-W? HE SURE DOESN'T SHARE THE HOUSE-POWER, DOES HE? WHAT DO YOU THINK, JIMMIE? WE COULD USE A HIRED HAND? WHY, I DON'T SEE WHY NOT. FRED, HE SEEMS LIKE A NICE YOUNG MAN!



IT WAS IMPORTANT TO LEARN... TO LEARN EVERYTHING. QUON ACCEPTED THE THIN WHITE TUBE... WATCHED THE FARMER... THEN IMITATED HIS ACTIONS.

THEN IT'S SETTLED? COME! I'LL SHOW YOU YOUR ROOM. YOU'LL LIKE IT HERE? WE'LL TRY TO MAKE IT PLEASANT FOR YOU, JOHNNY!



SO? WHEN MEN WERE TEENS... WHEN THEY WERE NERVOUS... EXCITED... ENROBSED IN IMPORTANT BUSINESS, THEY PUT A WHITE TUBE TO THEIR LIPS... LIT IT... AND RELAXED, QUON BRUSHED HIS. HE WOULD REMEMBER IT FOR FUTURE REFERENCE. BUT NOW... HE WAS SICK. THE ALLEN FOOD AND THE WHITE VAPOR FROM THE WHITE TUBE HAD NOT AGREED WITH HIM. IN HIS ROOM, THE FOOD HE'D EATEN SPUN UP...



AN UNHAPPY BEGINNING, YES, BUT THIS WAS QUON'S JOB. OBSERVE. LEARN. IMITATE. INTEGRATE. MOVE. FIND THE INFORMATION HIS LEADERS SOUGHT, QUON ACCEPTED HIS ROLE... ALONG WITH ITS DISCOMFORT. AND SOME HE EVEN BECAME USED TO...



QUON HAD NO DIFFICULTY LEARNING. HE IMITATED HIS FEELINGS, LOOKING FORWARD AS HE'D BEEN MADE TO DO... AND NONE SUSPECTED HIM. THERE WAS EVEN A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF AMUSEMENT TO BE FOUND... AT FIRST... WITH THE YOUNGER FEMALE...



YES, THE FEMALE WAS A PROBLEM NEAR THE END. SHE SPOKE WHISPERY OF A THING CALLED LOVE. BUT QUOR KNEW THAT HE'D SUCCEEDED... THAT HE'D BEEN ACCEPTED AS A MAN... AND SO HE MOVED ON...



... QUOR GATHERED HIS INFORMATION. AND WHEN HE'D FINISHED, HIS SHIP TOOK SILENTLY FROM EARTH ONE NIGHT AND RACED HOMEWARD TOWARD THE STARS...



BUT QUOR WAS NOT READY. QUOR WAS NERVOUS. FRIGHTENED! HE COULD NOT HELP! BUT WONDER, WHAT IF HIS INFORMATION WERE NOT COMPLETE? WHAT IF HE'D OVERLOOKED SOME VITAL DETAIL?



THE REST OF QUOR'S TASK WAS FAIRLY SIMPLE. ONCE SURE THAT WHENEVER HE WENT, HE WOULD NOT BE SUSPECTED, HE MOVED FIRST AT THE 4-ROOM FLYING SPOONER IN NEW MEXICO... IN THE BUILDING IN WASHINGTON, D.C., THAT MEN CALLED "THE PENTAGON"...



THEY MET HIM AT THE SPACEPORT, HIS PEOPLE. QUOR HAD NOT SEEN THEM IN SO LONG. HE SHOOKED AS ONE OF THEM WOUND A TENSACLE AROUND HIS ARM...



HAD HE SEEN ANOTHER MEN TOO LONG? HAD HE TRULY BEGUN TO LIVE AND THINK AND FEEL LIKE MEN? QUOR BREATHED DEEPLY OF THE FAMILIAR ATMOSPHERE AROUND HIM AND SMILED...



QUOR PAVED THE FLOOR BETWEEN THE TWO MASSIVE DOORS RESTLESSLY... AS A MAN MIGHT. HE NOTED WITH YES, HE HAD LEARNED HIS PART WELL. HE'D CONDITIONED HIMSELF. HE ALMOST SEEMED LIKE A MAN.



QUICK! STOOD BEFORE HIS LEADERS...
THE DATA IN HIS HAND...

I...I...
CHUCK...

WELL? YOU BEHAVE
STRANGELY, CHUCK! WE
ARE WAITING FOR YOUR
REPORT! ARE YOU
ILL?



W-WHAT? I AM
NOT ILL...
JUST... A
LITTLE...
TENSE!

SOFF! IT IS UNDER-
STANDABLE! YOUR
MISSION WAS OF
INFINITE IMPORT-
ANCE! RELAX,
THEN! WE WILL WAIT
UNTIL YOU HAVE
CALMED DOWN...



QUICK! SHOOK, HIS INFORMATION AID
TO BE SUFFICIENT. THE ENTIRE
COUNCIL OF LEADERS WAS HERE...
TO HEAR HIM! IT WAS AN HONOR
BEYOND HONOR! SO MUCH ATTENTION
UPON HIM! THEIR COLD INTELLIGENT
EYES WATCHED HIM AS HE FUMBLER
NERVOUSLY...



...WATCHED HIM AS HE TOOK THE LITTLE PACKAGE
FROM HIS POCKET... WATCHED HIM AS HE PLACED A
WHITE TUBE BETWEEN HIS LIPS... UNCONSCIOUSLY...
WATCHED HIM AS HE TURNED A RED-TIPPED STICKON
A SHOWN STRIP OF...



EPILOGUE: THE PROFESSOR PROCEEDED AS IF TO MAKE
CERTAIN THAT HE HAD HIS STUDENT'S FULL ATTENTION...

NOT THERE COULD HAVE BEEN NO LIFE ON THO! NOT IN A METHANE ATMOSPHERE! AS YOU KNOW, METHANE IS A HIGHLY COMBUSTIBLE GAS! THE TINIEST SPARK IGNITES IT!



THE PROFESSOR STARED AT THE FLAMING FURY ON
THE SCREEN...

SOMEHOW, THOUGH, THO!S ATMOSPHERE
WAS IGNITED! THE PROBLEM IS, HOW? WOULD
ANY OF YOU CARE TO VENTURE AN EXPLANATION?



THE
END!

BARRIER

THE SHIP WAS A SYMPHONY OF POWER... MAN, MEAT HER, AND
HURLED HER INTO THE VOID... TOWARD THE MOON, WHO FIRST
REACHED LUNA... WHO FIRST SET UP BAKER AND NEEDLE LAUNCHING
EYES ON CYNA, CONTROLLED EARTH? MAN IN HIS PRIDE AND IN HIS
FEAR REARER FOR THE STAGE, THE SHIP MOVED ON STEAMING
TENDRILS OF FLAME, AND THEN... IT DIED! IN THE BLACK EMPTY
REACHED, SOMETHING REVEALED... SOMETHING IMPALPABLE! HOLD UP
A GIANT PALM AND THE SHIP CRUSHED ITSELF AGAINST THAT PALM...



THE SHIP BECAME A CORPSE, A DEAD THING,
DEFLECTED BACK ALONG ITS COURSE, GLOW-
ING WHITE HOT FROM THE FRICTION OF
ENTERING EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE. IT SCREAMED
INTO THE NORTH ATLANTIC, BRACKING UP A HOWLING
SCYTHRAFER-HOOT SPLASH...



THE SHIP GIES. AND AFTERWARD, THE MAN WHOSE DREAM SHE'D BROKE... THE MAN WHO'D BUILT HER... SAT WITH THE GENERALS AND THE STATESMEN...

GENTLEMEN! THERE'S NO QUESTION OF WHAT HAPPENED THE OTHER DAY WAS COMPLETELY REFUTED! WE CAN'T KNOW HOW BUT WE KNOW WHY!

YOU SUSPECT THE EASTERN ALLIANCE, GENERAL?



EXACTLY! PROPORTION FOR FORTY EIGHT YEARS, EARTH HAS BEEN SPLIT INTO TWO CAMPS! FOR FORTY YEARS, WE'VE HAD ONE WAR! THE ANSWER IS SIMPLE!

IT'S NO SECRET THAT THE WESTERN DOMINATION COUNTRIES ARE IN A MARCH WITH THE EASTERN ALLIANCE, PROFESSOR!



WHEREVER OF OUR GOVERNMENTS SETS UP THE FIRST MILITARY BASE ON THE MOON CAN DICTATE ITS OWN FUTURE! OUR INTELLIGENCE REPORTS THAT THE EASTERN ALLIANCE'S SECRET IS NOT YET READY!

SO... MY HAS TO BE STOPPED! BUT WE MUST BE STRONG!



PROFESSOR BRISHTY! YOU WILL BUILD A SECOND STARSHIP! BUT THE SHIP MUST BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE WAR MUST KNOW WHAT DESTINY THE OTHER WAS SHIP! THIS ONE WILL BE ARMED! WILL YOU DO IT?

IT SEEMS I HAVE NO CHOICE, GENERAL!



NO, THERE WAS NO CHOICE. THE WAR WAS MORE URGENT NOW. MORE DEADLY. OUT IN THE SUNRISED NORTH AMERICAN DESERT, AN ALIEN SKELETON BEGAN TO GROW. MAN POUNDED HIS BREAST AND TOLL, AND THUNDERED INTO IT, AND FOR WHAT?



IT SEEMS A PUFF, DOESN'T IT, GENERAL? OUT THERE, ALL THE DARKNESS BECOMES! AND YET WE BUILD FOR WAR! FOR DEFENSIBILITY!

WE BUILD FOR PEACE, EASTERS! THERE WILL BE NO WAR IF WE CAN REACH LUNA FIRST! THE EASTERN ALLIANCE WOULD BE DEFEATED...

OF COURSE! IF WE ARE FIRST! AND IF WE CAN PENETRATE THE BARRER THEY'VE PLACED BETWEEN US AND LUNA! OVER-RISE!



OTHERWISE, WHAT? THE PROFESSOR DID NOT COMPLETE HIS THOUGHT! THAT WAS A PROBLEM FOR STRIKERMAN! AND GENERAL! THE PROFESSOR WAS A MAN OF SCIENCE! HE BUILT! AND HE BUILT WELL!



YES, THE PROFESSOR BUILT WELL... AND SWIFTLY. THERE WAS A DAY AT LAST WHEN A SECOND DAWN OF POWER DAWNED INTO SPACE...

PROFESSOR EMBRIGHT? I THINK WE'RE GETTING CLOSE TO SOMETHING! THE INSTRUMENTS ARE REACTING... ESPECIALLY THE AMBERST!



BUT THIS IS GENERAL HAZING! YOU SAY "JOKE" THEN THEN ON THAT FORCE FIELD... ON WHATEVER IT IS! BLAST FOUR BUT DESTROY! THAT'S IN ORDER!



OUR MOST POWERFUL WEAPONS... AND NOTHING HAPPENED! THERE, THERE, BUT IN A MINUTE THROUGH THAT FORCE FIELD! FINE! WELL, YOU'VE GOT TO FIND A WAY, EMBRIGHT!



THERE'S SOMETHING AWAY! WHATEVER IT IS, IT DOESN'T SHOW ON OUR MONITOR! BUT IT MUST HAVE ~~PROFOUND~~ POWER!



THE AMBERST ARE GOING CRAZY! WAIT A MINUTE! THEY MUST BE IT! EMBRIGHT! THERE MUST BE A BOLD PULL OF ENERGY AHEAD OF US! ALTER COURSE! TURN BACK!



LAST DESTROY! TEAR TO PIECES! PROFESSOR EMBRIGHT SMUGGLED. WOULD MEN NEVER LEARN THAT THERE WERE OTHER WAYS TO RESOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS INSTEAD OF USING DESTRUCTIVE BRUTE FORCE?



IT ALL SEEMED SO SENSELESS TO PROFESSOR EMBRIGHT. WHEN, AT LAST, HE RETURNED TO HIS LABORATORY. WHILE, ACROSS THE WORLD, OTHER MEN EMERGED FROM THEIR...



ACROSS THE WORLD ON THE FLAT PLAINS OF AN EASTERN ALLIANCE COUNTRY, MEN CHECKED ANOTHER ROCKET AND FOUND IT READY. AND SOON, ANOTHER TRAIL OF FIRE STRUCK INTO THE INFINITE VOID.



ANOTHER MAN-MADE MISSILE HURTTLED UPWARD TOWARD LUNA. AND AGAIN, IT WAS AS IF SOMETHING INVISIBLE, UNFATHOMABLE, RATTLED UP A SHINY PILEM.



BUT PROFESSOR BRIGHT KNEW NOTHING OF THAT. NOT THEN. IT WAS SOME DAYS LATER THAT HE WAS SUMMONED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE WESTERN FEDERATION AND HANDED THE NOTE WITH ITS FORMAL, DIPLOMATIC PHRASEOLOGY...



IF YOUR VOICE CAN EXERT ENOUGH
NEGATIVE REACTION AGAINST THE FIELD,
THE FIELD SHOULD BE THE MEDIUM
OF AT LEAST A MINORITY OF THAT
FIELD! I SAY, YES, EXACTLY! LET'S
GOOOO!!!



EARTH REMAINED TWO ARMED CAMPS,
YET THE WORK WENT ON. ONE DAY, THE
STAFFING OF HIS PLACE, AND THIS
TIME, WHEN THE FOLD, THE TAIL OF
PLANE, SPACEWARD, BATHING ROOM
WITH HE...



SO, ONCE AGAIN, THE FORCES GLOWED. THE COMFORT J-P WAS STRIPPED
DOWN AND REPORTED, WHILE EARTH'S FEDERATIONS AND ALLIANCES
WATCHED... JEALOUSLY...



ALL TIME, THERE WERE MEN IN HER
WHO WERE NEW TO SPACE... MEN WHO
WATCHED EVERY MOVE INTENTLY
BECAUSE THE MOUNTAIN OF THEM--CAREFUL
GUESS AND PROTECTORS--WAS NOT
AT THE CONTROLS...



NOW, GENTLEMEN, WE SHALL SEE
THE BATHING ROOM SHOW THE FIELD
TO BE SURVEY AREA OF LIFE

IF WE HAVE CALCULATED COR-
RECTLY, THE BEAM OF MICRONS
WE SHED OUT WILL, INSTANTLY
A PORTION OF THAT FIELD, AHEAD
GENTLEMEN... THEN WE'LL
PRICE THE FARM STAY...



TOUGHNESS, COORDINATING SHEETS OF
ARMOR PLATE POWER TO REVEAL THE
POWER OF THE SUN! THE EMPRESS
OF STICK-BLOWN, FLOODING
AND INSIDE THE SHIP, MEN SHROUDED.



THERE SEEMS TO BE AN
OPENING... ALL RIGHT! BUT
HOW DO WE KNOW IT'S
SAFE TO PASS THROUGH
THE OPENING?

WE'VE
PROBABLE
OF THAT!

WE CARRY SEVERAL SPARE
MAGNETS... IF THEY WILL PLACE
THOSE MAGNETS IN ONE OF THEM
IF THE MAGNETS SURVIVE THROUGH
THROUGH THE OPENING IN THE
FIELD, WE WILL!

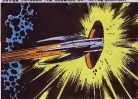


FROM A TINY PORT IN THE SHIP'S
SIDE, A MAGNET-CARRYING TORPEDO-
LINE MISSILE STREAKED TOWARD THE
SLANTED OPENING IN THE FORCE-
FIELD BARRIER.



THERE IS
AN OPENING!
THE MISSILE
IS GOING
THROUGH!
BUT WE DON'T KNOW YET
WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THE
MISSILE! IT WOULD BE WELL
NOT TO BE TOO HOPEFUL!
I'LL GUIDE THE MISSILE
BACK THROUGH THE OPENING...

HOWEVER, ENRIKID AND PETRON HAD PLANNED WELL. THE
TESTS SHOWED THAT LATER, THE MAGNETS WERE FRIGHT-
ENED... BUT HEALTHY AND UNHARMED. THE SHIP WAS
CUTTED THROUGH THE SLOWING GAP IN THE BARRIER.



NO MAN COULD REACH FOR THE STARS AFTER ALL! COME
NOW, THOUGH, PROFESSOR ENRIKID FELT NO PRIDE, HE
LEARNED BACK, RELEASED... AND THEN, SUCCESSFUL, EVERY
MOVE WITHIN HIM... EVERY SENSE SHOW THAT...



GENERAL! LOOK! LOOK!

THE OTHER SHIP WAS FLAT... GIRD-SHAPED... HEAVY...
UNBREAKABLE... IT CAME AT THEM AT IMPASSIBLE SPEED,
AND THERE WAS THREAT IN EVERY LINE OF ITS COMMANDING
BODY...



ANOTHER SHIP! BUT HEAVY! PROFESSOR!
IT'S NOT POSSIBLE!



THEY'RE POOR AT US! THAT WAS A BAD MOVE! BUT BEST TIME WE MAY NOT BE SO LUCKY!

PAF A BACE THAT CAN BUILD A BACE LIKE THAT WOULD HAVE TO DESTROY A TARGET ONLY IF THEY WANTED TO FAIL!



BUT...THEY'RE AFTER PAF...WHAT DO THEY WANT?

I THINK I KNOW...GIVE THE ORDER TO FORM BACE? PAF'S WHAT THEY WANT FOR US TO GO BACE THROUGH THE GAP IN THE FIELD?



PAF IN HIS RIGHT HAND LIKE A FIGHTING GLOVE...BACK THROUGH THE OPENING...IT'S MADE IN THE BATTLE...

PROFESSOR ENIGHT NODDED TO THE SCREEN...

I WAS WORRY? NOW THEY'LL PROBABLY REPAIR THE GAP AND FOR THE FIELD SO WE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO GET THROUGH AGAIN!

WE'LL GET THROUGH! HOWEVER...WHATEVER WAS IN THAT SHIP WON'T STOP US WE'LL GET THROUGH!

NO DOOMER THAN MY GOVERNMENT!



THE FOOLS! THE POOR, PITYFUL FOOLS! YES, YES, THEY DID NOT UNDERSTAND! THEY DO NOT BACE, EVEN WHEN ENIGHT WENT TO MOLIN THAT MAN COULDN'T REACH FOR THE STAR...

BEFORE YOU'RE WAR, PROFESSOR! THE CREATOR IN THAT SHIP...WHATEVER THEY ARE...FEAR US! TELL WHY THEY HATE THEY BACHED, AND IF THEY FEAR US, WE CAN REAR THEM!



PROFESSOR ENIGHT SHOOK HIS HEAD...

CAN WE REALLY? YOU CAN'T THEN ENIGHT NOT FEAR? NOT WHY THEY FUR UP THAT BACHED? MY GUESS IS THAT BACH HAS BEEN JOINED...AND FOUND BACHED! THEY'VE BACHED US IN?

BACHED US IN? WHY IS THERE AN OTHER INTELLIGENT BEING IN THE LIGHTHOUSE? WHY SHOULD BACH BE SHOT OUT...TO BE...BACHED ANY?



THE ANSWER WAS OBVIOUS...SO BITTLY INTENSELY OBVIOUS. EVEN THE GENERAL IN HIS STUNNOR, FINALLY UNDERSTOOD WHEN ENIGHT POINTED IT OUT TO HIM...

SUPERNATURAL! WELL, WHAT DO WE DO WITH A SUPERNATURAL, BACHED ANOMALY?

